

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 05545 291117Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 755

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: US PRESS INTEREST IN INDONESIAN ELECTIONS

REF: JAKARTA 5393

1. US MEDIA NOW SEEM TO BE PLANNING LESS DIRECT COVERAGE OF INDONESIAN ELECTIONS THAN WE HAD EXPECTED. UPI'S KATE WEBB AND AP'S KEN WHITING HAVE ARRIVED BUT TIME'S ROY ROWAN IS NOW PLANNING COME AFTER THE ELECTION AND WASHINGTON POST AND NYT WILL APPARENTLY NOT SEND REPRESENTATIVES. WEBB, WHITING AND MOST RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES OF US MEDIA TELL US THEY DO NOT NOW PLAN TRIPS OUTSIDE JAKARTA, ALTHOUGH GOI HAS PROVIDED THEM NECESSARY TRAVEL PERMITS.

2. IN EVENT OF ANY QUERIES HERE RELATING TO OUR VIEW OF INDONESIAN ELECTIONS, WE PLAN COMMENT ALONG FOLLOWING LINES AND SUGGEST DEPARTMENT MAY WISH DO SAME:

A. WE NATURALLY WELCOME THIS EXPRESSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN INDONESIA. WE WELCOME, ALSO, THE FACT THAT FACILITIES HAVE BEEN AFFORDED TO THE FOREIGN PRESS AND OTHER OBSERVERS TO WITNESS THE ELECTIONS IN THE CITIES AND PRINCIPAL TOWNS OF INDONESIA.

B. ON A BACKGROUND BASIS, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH JOURNALISTS AND OTHER OBSERVERS, WE HAVE ALSO BEEN POINTING

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OUT THAT: (1) CREDIT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO AND SUPPORT OF THE ELECTIONS; (2) WITHIN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, DEVISED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INDONESIA'S OWN CONSTITUTION AND CUSTOMS, THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION, ITSELF AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM; AND (3) THE DOMESTIC PRESS HAS BEEN REPORTING WITH CONSIDERABLE

FREEDOM ON THE CAMPAIGNS AND PROBLEMS OF THE ELECTIONS.

NEWSOM

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